

1838 FOURTH OF JULY

CELEBRATION IN BLOOMSBURG

Introductory Comment: *This is a combined article using segments from two accounts that appeared in the Columbia County Democrat, a Bloomsburg newspaper, on July 7 and 14, 1838, reporting on an Independence Day celebration. It describes a picnic attended by young men and women along the banks of the Fishing Creek, giving toasts, and an impromptu parade through the streets of Bloomsburg that concluded at Daniel Snyder's Forks Hotel. A selection of interesting toasts, expressing patriotic and nationalistic themes on a variety of subjects, is also included. They paid homage to the revolutionary generation, extolled the region's mineral wealth, praised to those who gave their lives for the cause of liberty in the 1837 revolts against British rule in Upper and Lower Canada, exalted the virtuous, intelligent, and moral attributes of women, and, lastly, expressed appreciation to Valentine Bidleman for his hospitality in allowing them to use his grove for their picnic.*

The following selections are verbatim from the two articles that appeared in the newspaper.

The young Gentlemen and Ladies of Bloomsburg and vicinity, celebrated the National Anniversary in a grove, near Fishing Creek, about half a mile from this village. Agreeable to arrangements previously made by the Young men of Bloomsburg, to celebrate the 4th of July, 1838, being the 62 anniversary of American Independence; the company met at the house of Daniel Snyder, at 1 ½ o'clock, P.M., from whence they repaired in procession attended by an elegant band of Music, to a Grove on the bank of Fishing creek, on the farm of Mr. Valentine Bidleman, where they all sat down (in number about 100 Ladies and Gentlemen) to a sumptuous repast prepared by Mr. Snyder. After the cloth had been removed, the Declaration of Independence was read by Mr. Samuel Yearick, and an oration delivered by Mr. William Neal, with which the company was highly pleased.

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The following are selected toasts with some accompanied by music:

The day we celebrate – Its annual return will be hailed with joy as long as the blessings of liberty and national happiness are appreciated. *Hail Columbia.*

The surviving Soldiers of the Revolution – Remnants of a glorious race; honoured whilst living, and when dead, millions will hallow their memories. *Banks of Air*

The signers of the Declaration of Independence – Their words for our imitation are lasting evidences of their greatness. *Irish quick step*

The Army and Navy – The pride of our country and the shield of our national defence. *Yankee Doodle*

The ore miners of Co. Co. – May they prove an inexhaustible source of wealth to their owners.

By the President [William Neal] – Soldiers of the revolution – Light lie the sods which deck their honoured graves.

By the 1st Vice President [James Barton] – The Coal fields of Pennsylvania – resources of more real value to the people than would be all the Gold mines of South America, did she possess them.

By the 2nd Vice President [Marshall Silverthorn] – Internal Improvement – Let it be continued until the East shall be drawn nearer the West, and the North to the South, and all shall feel an interest in each portion of our country.

By W. Bird – The ore mines of Columbia county – They have proven themselves by experience to be inexhaustible; may the sound of the Forge hammer, soon resound in every part of our county, in the manufacture of her Iron.

By J. T. Musselman – The Patriots of Canada – May the blood of the brave Lount and Matthews, shed in the cause of liberty be a strong incentive to urge their brethren on in the holy cause, and their efforts must be crowned with success.

By Jacob Eyer – May freedom and independence exist as the beloved name of Washington, which will never sink into oblivion as long as a son in America is born.

By Tench C. Kintzing – The American fair – May they become mothers of a race of freemen, that will make Kings and Emperors tremble, if they interfere with their rights.

By Samuel Yearick – Thomas Jefferson – The Apex of human greatness, whose giant mind projected, and whose hand penned the immortal declaration of independence; his memory will be venerated, as long as moral worth and exalted virtues shall receive an approving sentence from the human heart.

R. B. Menargh – The Ladies in attendance to day – Virtuous, intelligent and lovely, language cannot portray their excellence.

Judah Boone – The Ladies – Ornaments in the nation, the only sure guide of moral and religious duties.

By the Company – Mr. Valentine Bidleman – For his gentlemanly conduct in furnishing the young people of Bloomsburg and vicinity, with a suitable place to hold their celebration, deserves, and does highly receive the thanks of the company.

After spending a few hours in social hilarity in the cool shade of that pleasant retreat, bordering on the banks of Fishing Creek, the company formed a procession, of about an hundred and twenty in number, (including two parties of young Masters and Misses, who had assembled in the same neighborhood, and partaken of some good cheer proved expressly for them) headed by a band of martial music, under the command of Capt. Biggs, marched into town, down First street, and up the whole length of Centre street, presenting such an array of beauty, correct deportment, and good order, in one procession, as never before witnessed by the citizens of Bloomsburg. After arriving at Mr. Snyder's, the company again partook of some cooling refreshments, and then separated with all the good feeling that the day is so well calculated to inspire, after having been passed in so pleasant and social a matter.